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S T R I C T U R E S

ON

Mr. BURKE's

T W O L E T T E R S,

ADDRESSED TO A

MEMBER of the PRESENT PARLIAMENT

ON THE

Proposals for Peace

WITH THE

REGICIDE DIRECTORY

OF

F R A N C E,

AND UPON THE

Proposal for Funding the NAVY DEBT.



BY THE AUTHOR OF SIMKIN'S LETTERS.

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR J. DEBRETT, OPPOSITE BURLINGTON-HOUSE,
PICCADILLY.

1796.

STRICTURES,

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IN examining this pamphlet it is necessary to follow the advice which Horace gave to the dealers in horses—

When skilful jockeys would a courser buy,
They strip him naked to the searching eye.

Mr. Burke's ideas are so obscured by the fantastical dresses in which they appear, that it is no easy matter to discover their true shape and figure. His object, however, is to excite an universal enmity towards the French Republic, and to reconcile the people of this country to a prolongation of the war. The reasons he assigns for this universal and everlasting hatred are to be found in page 97 of his avowed edition. I mean the three and sixpenny pamphlet sold by Rivington. In the first place stands Regicide—

B secondly,

secondly, Jacobinism—thirdly, Atheism—fourthly, Correspondent System of Manners.

Two considerations present themselves to the mind of a dispassionate reader. First, Whether these charges are founded in fact; and secondly, Whether they are proper grounds for war, even if they should be founded in fact. Another consideration will obtrude itself upon us by and bye, viz. Whether Austria and England united will be able to extirpate these evil principles from the French nation, even if the two foregoing questions should be answered in the affirmative.

I shall begin with Regicide, by which Mr. Burke means, not the fact which has been long since committed, and which he knows cannot now be remedied, but the principle by which the French justify their hatred to monarchy.

Every person who is in the smallest degree conversant with the history of the Greeks and Romans, must know that these two celebrated people held monarchy in as great contempt and abhorrence as the French do at this moment. The Greeks stigmatized kings under the name of tyrants, and many years after the expulsion of Tarquin, it was a capital offence at Rome for any person even to wish to become a king. Manlius fell a sacrifice to this inveterate hatred to

to monarchy, notwithstanding his bravery in defending the capitol had saved the republic from being annihilated by the Gauls. When I was a boy at school, I was taught to admire this independent spirit of the Greeks and Romans. Cato, Brutus, and many others, are celebrated at this day for their resistance to monarchy : but now suddenly we find, that what was a virtue in all ages, and has been so considered by a great part of mankind until Thursday the 20th of October, 1796, is, by the bare dictum of Mr. Burke, converted into a crime of such an enormous nature, as to call for the extirpation of twenty millions of people. What wonderful powers must this man possess, who can, with such facility and readiness, change the nature and essence of all the vices and virtues incident to the human race ! I always thought it a great thing when a prophet or messenger from God changed the divine ordinances which had been promulgated by his predecessor ; but I did not refuse my assent to the new doctrine, because I thought it possible God might see cause for changing his mind in some few particular cases. But when an individual, who does not pretend to divine inspiration, changes vice into virtue, and virtue into vice, according to his own whim and caprice, I must say that I cannot avoid questioning his authority. Though I am by no means a republican in spirit, but, on the contrary, am fully persuaded, that for the general interest of man-

kind, a limited monarchy is better than the best republic that can ever be reduced to practice ; yet I cannot think that regicide, or in other words, an antipathy to kings, can be a sufficient ground for everlasting war, either in justice or policy. In justice it certainly cannot ; and as to policy, it involves a great question. It is a speculative question, and which, however ingeniously it may be argued on both sides, will require many years before it can be ultimately decided.

The next in order is Jacobinism, a word which would not be intelligible had it not been explained by the author himself. I must observe that the present government of France has as great an aversion to jacobinism as Mr. Burke can possibly have. They have even gone so far as to abolish the bank, as our author is pleased, in the effervescence of fancy, to call the late Jacobin club or association. But I apprehend the French do not use the word jacobinism in precisely the same sense as Mr. Burke does. They mean anarchy and disobedience to the new laws. Mr. Burke defines it thus :—“ Jacobinism is the revolt of the enterprising talent of a country against its property. When private men form themselves into associations for the purpose of destroying pre-existing laws and institutions of their country—when they secure to themselves an army, by dividing among them

“ the

“ the people of no property, the estates of the
 “ ancient and lawful proprietors ; when a state
 “ recognises these acts ; when it does not make
 “ confiscations for crimes, but makes crimes for
 “ confiscations ; when it has its principal
 “ strength and all its resources in such a viola-
 “ tion of property ; when it stands chiefly upon
 “ such violations, massacring by judgment or
 “ otherwise those who make any struggle for
 “ their old legal government, or their legal
 “ hereditary or acquired possessions : I call this
 “ jacobinism by establishment.”

The picture here exhibited is the history of the means whereby the revolution was accomplished, and the republic preserved from the attacks of its foreign and domestic enemies. But Mr. Burke must be very weak indeed, if he supposes that the new government of France will establish jacobinism or authorise a repetition of these measures against themselves. The fact is, most governments have been originally established in blood and violence ; but as soon as the usurper is in full possession of power, and has reduced all his new subjects to obedience, he becomes the greatest advocate for regularity and good order, and for his own sake puts a stop to anarchy and confusion. Our author here confounds together two things that ought to be kept very distinct from each other. The means whereby the present rulers of France acquired

their authority were undoubtedly such as Mr. Burke has described them, but that is no argument or proof of their meaning to continue in the same tract: on the contrary, they will act as all other states have acted before them. They will keep up armies, by dividing among the people of no property (soldiers in barracks for example) the taxes levied on the labour of the industrious, and on the property of the merchants and landholders. They will make crimes for confiscations; such as twenty pounds penalty for wearing powder without a licence, twenty-five pounds penalty for killing a partridge without a qualification and a certificate, and they will put to death all those who shall conspire against their just and lawful government; for such they will call their usurpation after a very few years have passed over their heads. Time will give them the right of prescription, as it has done and will do to all other governments.

I can scarcely forbear laughing when Mr. Burke talks of the revolt of talents against property. Instead of revolt read assault of talents against property, and we have a glorious example of it without going far to find it. But upon second thoughts, I think revolt reads better, because the same hand which makes the assault was once one of its defenders. If we can look over and forgive the crime already committed, we have nothing to dread from this example

ample more than other nations had to fear from the example of 1648. Other kings and states did not refuse to treat with Cromwell, whose title to the protectorate was not an iota better than the title of Rewbell and Carnot is to a seat in the Directory at Paris. We do not hear of any fanatic in those days who preached up a general crusade against England, and called for an extirpation of all the English, because they had put their sovereign to death, and formed themselves into a sort of republic. There was no Burke in those times, and fortunately for the peace of mankind there was not.

Whether the establishment of a republic in France may ultimately lead to the establishment of a republic in England, is a very great and serious question. But granting that there may be some danger which it will be easy for administration to guard against, surely that could be no reason for perpetuating a war with France; nor do I see how it can be for the interest of the people of England to sacrifice their lives and fortunes to guard against a possible danger, that it is most probable will never happen, and if it should happen, would not be attended with so much evil as a war, prosecuted *usque ad internectionem*, must be to both nations. It is to be hoped that the people will be wise enough to see and to pursue their own interests, and not be led away by an *ignis fatuus*, by the apparently frantic

tic enthusiasm of a man who perhaps feels nothing of what he professes, who may be acting his part, like Mrs. Siddons in a play, in the hope of another benefit in another pension. It should never be a moment out of the reader's recollection, that it is the work of Mr. Burke, the pensioner, not the work of Mr. Burke, the cool, the calm, the dispassionate philosopher.

The next cause of perpetual warfare is atheism by establishment. That this is a false representation I prove by his own words; for Mr. Burke says, that the government, wearied out by the cries of a people hungering and thirsting for religion, permits the exercise of it as a tolerated evil. Atheism makes no part of their test act, and consequently is not by establishment. It is much to be doubted whether there exists such a being as an atheist; and if there are any, they will be found among the clergy themselves, if a man's opinions can be inferred from his conduct. The clergy have themselves only to blame for all the violences that have been committed on them; the pious frauds, the holy tricks, the sanctified deceptions which they have played off on the credulity of mankind, have not only brought them into contempt, but excited a general indignation against them throughout all Europe. But above all, their avarice is a perpetual reproach to the whole order. Every religion, says the learned Selden, is a getting religion,

igion, and therefore a suspicious religion of course. I speak this of the Romish clergy, which I hope I may be allowed to do, without giving offence to the excellent clergy of this country, as Mr. Burke calls them. I do not know in what particular this excellency is found to exist, except in their assiduity and diligence in the collection of tythes. It is not to be wondered at, if people who had just thrown off the heavy yoke of clerical bondage should carry their resentment a little too far, and in their turn oppress their oppressors. Religion or superstition is so natural to the mind of man, that it is impossible almost for an individual of the most fortified understanding to live long without it. The people of France will naturally fall back into religion of some sort or other, and the legislature will find it their interest to encourage that form and mode of belief that is best suited to the purposes of government. There is certainly nothing to be apprehended by England from the religious principles, or from the want of religious principles among the people of France.

Before I quit this topic it may be worth while to inquire into the religion of our author; and to get at information, we must compare his conduct with his profession. He would have us believe that he is a Christian; the follower of a religion, that of all others is the most strenuous against war and persecution. How excellent a

Christian this man is, may be inferred from the pamphlet now under examination. The whole drift of the work is, to drive the precepts of Christianity out of the minds of the people, and to replace them with a mania for blood, massacre, and devasiation. Because the French do not think of the most eligible form of government, like himself, they are to be totally destroyed and annihilated. Is there in the whole history of ecclesiastical tyranny, a stronger instance of bigotry, cruelty, and iniquity, than is here exhibited by this phænomenon in morality? He has given a name for the Republic of France, making regicide and France synonymous and convertible terms. It would be no more than retaliation, were the French writers, if they ever condescend to mention his name, to stigmatize him by the name of plebicide, and let that be synonymous and convertible with the Right Hon. Edmund Burke.

As the doctrine of Christianity will not bear him out in his thirst for slaughter and destruction, he has recourse to the law of nations; but unfortunately for his purpose, nothing can be found therein that will justify his principles. He then looks into the old Roman law, and there he finds something about the right of vicinage, whereby one neighbour is restrained from erecting any new work that may injure another. Though this was merely a municipal institution,

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and easily determinable by the praetor, whether there was a danger from the innovation or not, yet Mr. Burke transfers this reasoning to the case between England and France. He argues thus: If individuals have a right to denounce each other, and to call upon the judge to stop the progress of the innovation till the degree of danger be estimated by the neighbours, one nation has a right to check the opinions of another in matter of government and religion. Here is no analogy whatever between the two cases. The denouncer and the denounced are not judges in their own case; but the two nations have no umpire to determine whether there be any danger or not. I presume, however, that Mr. Burke is not only a self-created jurist, but a self-erected umpire between two great nations. Such is the unparalleled impudence of this assuming plebeicide by intention.

I come now to consider the correspondent system of manners which, our author says, is of more importance than the system of laws.

The first thing that offends him is their extreme patriotism. It seems, that some of the drunken fish-women outdid Brutus, who condemned his own son to death for a conspiracy against the republic. These women demanded the death of their sons for being royalists. It is worthy of note, that the whole drift of Burke's

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pamphlet is to excite as similar a mania in favour of royalty, as these female drunkards shewed against it. It is from despair that Burke expects salvation. Here we see another instance of inconsistency: but what signifies the addition of unity to chiliads?

The next moral cause of everlasting war is, the facility of obtaining divorce by both sexes. He cannot endure the idea of granting so great an indulgence to the ladies; but I leave this to support their own claim, and shall inquire, by what right a nation presumes to dictate to another upon this subject. If a defence were necessary, the French might plead the law of Moses, which, coming from God himself, cannot be totally abrogated and done away: but if it can be totally set aside; and if the words of Christ, "Those whom God has joined, let no man put asunder," are to be considered as rendering divorce in all cases divinely illegal, how comes it that Doctors' Commons exercise a power that is taken from them by the gospel? But it will be said, that Doctors' Commons only half cut the marriage knot; to which I answer, that the Lords and Commons can, when they chuse, cut the other half; and so put asunder those whom God had joined together. Thus do those two dispensing powers, dividing the sin of disobedience between them, take upon themselves to set aside the positive injunctions of the gospel. I appeal to

com-

common sense, whether there be most equity and justice in the English law, or in the French? The former allows divorce, but it must be bought at a dear rate, and consequently out of the reach of people of small fortunes: the latter allows divorce to all people indiscriminately, and upon the same terms and conditions as were prescribed by God in his ordinances delivered to Moses. I trust our divines, excellent as they may be, will not pretend to say, that they are wiser than God, or that Moses, under the name of God, put upon the world his own opinions. Cannibalism is the next cause of our author's displeasure. The custom, if it were a custom, is abominable beyond toleration; but it is impossible such a practice can ever become general.

I have now collected all Mr. Burke's grounds for everlasting warfare between two great nations, and I cannot help thinking it would be an insult to common sense, were I to enter into any further argument to prove the invalidity of each, considered separately, or of the whole taken collectively. I have taken no notice of the fine figures, metaphors, images, and all the farrago of false rhetoric, with which this pamphlet is loaded, even to the excitement of nausea in the grossest appetites. In some places we see regicide in the form of a Colossus, setting one foot at Dover and the other at Calais. Another time we see it in the shape of a spectre, rising out of the tomb of departed

departed monarchy, and frightening people who walk in the dark. Another time we find it in Trophonius's Cave, saddening the countenances of all the ambassadors who go thither to consult regicide in the shape of a directory. Another time the Jacobins become syrens, and lull people with their songs; and endanger their salvation, as they did the safety of Ulysses and the ship's company on his return from Troy. A thousand other fancies serve to fill up the book, and put another sixpence or a shilling in the author's pocket, which has something clerical in its texture, and is always craving. I have read the work twice over, once with the intention of finding something to laugh at, and once with an intention of finding something for grave and serious consideration. Of the former, the crop was abundant, even to superfluity: of the latter, there was a great scarcity. I think, as the gentleman advances in age, the proportion of scurrility increases. He is rather more abusive on regicide, than he was formerly on Indian peculation. I remember some years back, I was highly delighted with his diversification of reproach; and it was by the extreme facility with which his speeches turned into verse, and the additional lustre which poetry gave to extravagance, that I was induced from time to time to verify his finest and most sublime orations. I can, however, assure the public, that I never derived in any way, directly or indirectly, immediately or immediately, the final-

lest advantage from any thing I ever wrote, since I have been able to hold the pen. I never called the bookseller to account for the profits obtained by the illustration of Mr. Burke's speeches, as he has acted by Mr. Owen, with respect to the profits obtained by the cutting up of a ducal character. I am clearly of opinion, that his Grace might obtain one-third of the profits, if it were not beneath his rank and character to make his claim in a court of justice. As well might the clothier refuse to pay the merchant for the wool, of which the cloth is made, as Mr. Owen might refuse to account for a share of his profits to his Grace, who furnished materials for the pamphlet in dispute.

To return, however, to the subject of Mr. Burke's pamphlet, it is to be observed, that though our author would have the people go on everlastingly with the war against France, he frankly acknowledges there is no prospect of success, except what may arise from the chapter of accidents, and from a paroxysm of despair. He bids the people despair of success in order to encourage them to make the attempt. Can any man contemplate this absurdity without connecting with it the fate of Brothers, and a straight waistcoat?

In his zeal for the defence of kings, he tells us, that they published glorious and virtuous ma-

nifestoes, which cost them nothing but a few sheets of paper; that they promised to act honourably and disinterestedly; but as soon as an opportunity presented itself, they fell to plundering, and thought of nothing but dismembering France, and aggrandizing themselves by extent of territory. Supposing this to be a truth, which, for the honour of kings, I hope was done unintentionally, if it were done at all, they appear in as fair a light to the public eye, as a thief does in that of a shopkeeper, whose house being on fire, sees the very man who came to extinguish the flames, walking off with a bundle of lace or muslin. The Lord, in his dialogue with Samuel, as quoted by Mr. Paine, has not been so severe on crowned heads, as Mr. Burke, their able advocate and pensioned defender, has been in this exposure of their views and actions. What an incontestable argument he has put into the mouths of the Jacobins, and all the enemies of kingly government!

But kings are not the only sufferers by his intemperate fallies, and his unguarded assertions. The account he gives of the duplicity of the majority in both Houses of Parliament, furnishes an argument to the advocates for reform, that can never be answered but by imputing calumny and falsehood to their own defender. I apprehend this pamphlet must have been published without an imprimatur from the Treasury Board, other-

wife the meanest clerk in office would have seen the danger and impropriety of such admissions.

I had almost forgot the compliments paid to the ministers, who it seems are willing to go on with the war as long as the Parliament and the people will let them ; but sooner than lose their places and emoluments, they will consent to let the people have a peace. I dare say they would be very willing to have the disposal of 50 millions this year, 75 next, 112 next after, and so on, till there will not be a shilling to be found in Europe. Surely Mr. Pitt did not see this paragraph before it went to press. But who can read Mr. Burke's lamentation on this subject, without joining with him in condolence, for it certainly will be a most distressing thing to the ministers to have their patronage circumscribed ? Still, however, it is to be hoped, that their emoluments will be sufficient to keep up their accustomed conviviality, but if they should not, a short bill might be brought into the House for their better accommodation.

Mr. Pitt is not much better treated, where Mr. Burke tells the public, that the minister made war in a frolic, and flirted with Bellona by way of experiment. I should rather believe, that the minister's private motive, if he had any, was the ambition of rivalling the reputation of his father ; which he has done most effectually ; that is, he

has shewn himself as great in finking a nation, as his father was in raising it. They are contrary qualities and effects, but both equally pre-eminent in their way.

I have shewn the obligations which kings, ministers, and parliaments lie under to this wild and eccentric writer; and I will now point out his benevolence to himself. He traces the revolution in France to its various causes and sources. Among the rest he discovers one in the American war, and tells us, that Louis the Sixteenth owed his ruin to his prudence. This monarch aimed at establishing one republic, but, to his sorrow, laid the foundation of two.

Is it possible Mr. Burke could look on the American war as one of the leading causes of the French Revolution, without saying to himself—*Et quorum pars magna fui?* There was a time when this man was as zealous an advocate for liberty, as he is now for aristocracy. There was a time when he gloried in exciting the Americans to resistance. Now he tells us that this very measure, which he laboured so assiduously and so successfully to bring about, was one of the causes which produced this great revolution in France, and which is likely to affect all Europe. One would think the reflection would fill him with shame and remorse, and that with tears in his eyes he would prostrate himself before

fore injured and insulted majesty, and say, *Sur-gam, et ibo ad regem meum, et dicam ei, Pater! pec-cavi in cælum et coram te, et jam non sum dignus penitentia mea.*—“ I will arise, and go to my fa-
ther, and will say unto him, Father, I have
“ sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and
“ am no more worthy to be called thy son.”—
But mark—how does he act? Instead of ac-
knowledging his demerits, he writes a book
to prove that his merits are like infinite
space, beyond the power of comprehension; and like the sin against the Holy Ghost,
beyond the power of redemption. Can any
thing in history, ancient or modern, equal the
absurdity of this man? I know of nothing that
can excite equal wonder in a reflecting mind,
except the goodness of Christian majesty in re-
turning so much good for so much evil. Who
can read Pope’s account of Scoto’s opinions
without thinking of Mr. Burke—

Ask man’s opinions---Scoto now shall tell,
How trade increases, and the world goes well:
Strike off his pension by the setting sun,
And England, if not Europe, is undone.

Another inconsistency presents itself in this ex-
traordinary performance, and that is, the un-
qualified praise which he bestows on the minister;
to be sure, like a cow that gives a fine mess of
milk, and then kicks it down, he puts his dirty
foot into it, by proving to a demonstration what
no man ever questioned, namely, that the con-

duct of the war has been a series of blunders from beginning to the end, I should say to the present time, for God only knows when it will end.

Another of his inconsistencies, and which should have been stated two or three pages before, is, his description of the fascinating powers of jacobinism. I wonder he forgot to compare it to the rattlesnake, which is said to draw every bird that catches its eye into its own vortex. According to our author, no person can enter France without being a convert and a disciple; nay, an ambassador that goes only to ask a question from the Jacobin Directory, becomes instantly a conspirator and an assassin. He tells us also that jacobinism is spread over all nations, and is so palatable to the taste, that every body is delighted with it. This description he uses as an argument to persuade the people of England to go on with the war until they have killed all the Jacobins, or have lost their own lives in the attempt. But it seems it will not be sufficient to destroy all the French, but almost all other nations.

Among other absurdities, to which there is no end, we may class his opinion, that nations may flourish for ever, notwithstanding experience has shewn the contrary; to be sure, it does not follow as a certain conclusion, that every future or present nation must some time or other lose its greatness, because history affords no instance

instance of any nation's continuing its superiority for many centuries together ; yet the decay is so strongly presumptive, that dogmatism of the most audacious kind would hardly venture to assert the possibility of eternal duration. Our author, however, is equal to this also, as he is to every thing else, however absurd and whimsical.

The advice which Mr. Burke gives present and future ministers, to disregard the voice of the people, is of a nature too atrocious to be treated with the same levity with which I have treated many of his whimsical assertions. It is one of those things that call aloud for popular indignation and resentment against him. Every person who has a stake in the community, has a right to cry out when his property is in danger. Mr. Burke seems to forget that the people do not belong to a ministry as a flock of geese do to a farmer's wife upon a common, whose feathers she may pick off at pleasure, and then turn the poor creatures out to starve with cold till another crop grows up. The minister belongs to the nation, that is, to the people, and not the people to him. It is not, however, at all surprizing that a minister who can ask and have just what money he pleases from the pockets of the people, should be led into a mistake, namely, that the people are his bees, and that he is to come when he likes and take away the honey which their industry has collected.

It is curious to hear this man say, in page 137, that falsehood and delusion are allowable in no case whatever, when his own conscience must tell him, that his whole political life has been a series of delusions from one end to the other. What is rhetoric and all its figures but a delusion? He talks also of an economy of truth. This appears to have been his distinguishing public virtue; he has been a great economist indeed.

His hatred to philosophy and mathematics is no more than may be justly expected from a man of enthusiasm and erratic imagination. He cannot be more hostile to them than they are to him. He is justified in his hatred from the great injury they do him upon every occasion. They are natural enemies, and must for ever be in opposition. Philosophy sees through all his artifice and fineesse, whilst calculation gives a flat contradiction to every thing that he advances. Such, for example, is his assertion respecting the public wealth of this kingdom. Full even to a plethora, says this prosaic poet, or poetic prose-writer, we are even encumbered by our wealth, and the very reason of our being unable to stir, is the weight of riches that impedes our motion. What a flowery, false, delusive representation is this! Every man's feelings must contradict this impudent assertion. If the gentleman, instead of wealth, had said debt, there

would have been much truth in his argument. If the public be so overburdened with wealth, how many channels may be opened for drawing off the superfluity ? The civil list may be paid up all their arrears ; the exchequer bills might be paid off : a variety of ways are open to ease this nation of its plethora, and to prevent the danger of its going off suddenly in an apoplexy.

To explain this idea of Mr. Burke's more fully to vulgar comprehension, I must observe, that what Mr. Burke calls the wealth of the public, is, in fact, the debts of the public. I mean, that this present minister, and others, his predecessors, have sold the labours of the whole mass of people to certain contractors and loanists. The loanists have sold certain portions of it to monied men, who are thereby become the proprietors of labour and industry. These sales amount to not less than 14 millions a year. Now it is true, that if we consider the public as one family, we are just as rich now as when the funding system begun, except what may be due to foreigners, the amount of which I cannot estimate. The embarrassment which ministers labour under, is the difficulty of preserving their faith with the stockholders, and to raise money at the same time for the carrying on of the war. They want twenty millions by way of taxes to pay the interest and other ordinary expences ; and they want also forty or fifty millions more for

for the extraordinaries. I mean the expences of the war, subsidies, &c. &c. &c. &c.

Now, says Mr. Pitt, (for I must here drop Mr. Burke, who is too vague, too diffuse, too extravagant, to deserve serious refutation) it is very true that money, meaning gold and silver, is very scarce ; but this scarcity is the effect, not of poverty, but of riches.

I could not read this in the Morning Post of October the 29th, without calling to mind the observation of a Scot's gentleman, during his travels through South Wales. The weather happened to be wet and stormy, and he very gravely said, " It always rains in Wales."—" Not always," replied a gentleman of the county.—" Yes, it does," says the other, " though the natives do not know it."—In like manner, the scarcity of money in this country is owing to its abundance, though the people do not know or feel it. I know not how other people may feel this ministerial paradox, but to me it seems an insult to common sense and understanding. Now I take the causes of the present scarcity of gold and silver to be as follows: First, The quantity of circulating specie has never been estimated at much above 26 millions. Our minister should tell us, out of these 26 millions, how many he has sent in specie to the King of Sardinia, to the Emperor, to

to the King of Prussia, to St. Domingo, to the navy in the Mediterranean, in short, to all places where our troops and fleets are stationed ; and to all kings, princes, and potentates, whom, from time to time, we have subsidized and made our debtors. It is in evidence that the minister has obtained by way of loan—first year, 7 millions ; second, 11 ditto ; third, $22\frac{1}{2}$ ditto ; fourth, $25\frac{1}{2}$ ditto ; besides the funding of about 22 millions of navy debt. In this calculation I do not descend to fractions ; but I shall not be much out if I say, that he has received in specie, or in paper payable at the bank, 88 millions since the commencement of this war. Now if only one quarter part of this sum were exported for foreign service, there would be an end to all the circulating cash of this kingdom. I certainly grope in the dark when I rate the amount of exported specie ; I have not the means of correct information : but it is reasonable to suppose, that when so much actual service, and so much subsidiary service, has been performed abroad, that large sums must have been exported. Mr. Pitt allows that much has been exported ; and I should feel myself highly gratified by a specification of quantity, time, place, and service : that, however, I despair of ever knowing. These are arcana for men in office. Some part of the sums expended abroad may have been paid by bills ; but to no great amount, it being impossible to draw bills for more than the balance be-

tween the amount of goods exported and goods imported. In addition to this cause of scarcity, I may state another ; which is, the recent example of a paper currency in France, and the alarm created by the fears of invasion, which could not fail of shaking paper credit, and rendering gold and silver an object of concealment. This alone would draw out of circulation half the specie it ever contained in the moment of its highest prosperity and greatest security. I think the two causes I have stated are sufficient to account for the want of circulating cash ; but I could state others if these were insufficient. To remedy this evil, Mr. Pitt has resolved on funding the navy debt to the amount of ten millions ; but how this can add to the circulating medium one single guinea, is more than I can possibly imagine.

The fact is this : people, when the stocks are very low, do not like navy bills, for they argue thus : A navy bill of 100*l.* (I suppose in this case no discount) will, in fifteen months, amount to 105*l.* If this 100*l.* were in money, I could buy with it (3 per cent. stocks being at 60) almost 170*l.* the interest of which will be 5*l.* per ann. and if there should be a rise of 10 per cent., or, perhaps, 20, on the making of a peace, the 170*l.* stock may be worth 136*l.* so that there would be a clear gain of 36 per cent. As this case is uncertain, the buyer and seller of a navy bill divide

vide the chance between them, and therefore the buyer is allowed 15*l.* to a certainty, in order to induce him to give up the chance of 30*l.* or 40*l.* profit. If the minister had acted like a judicious steward for the public, it would have been much better to have increased the loan in April last, and instead of borrowing 7*½* to have borrowed 17. It may be said, why borrow more than you want? I answer, he must have known at that time that there would be an enormous navy debt, as the bills for victualling, &c. were not to be paid from the loan then made, but from a new one to be made under another name.

The minister does not like calling the funding of the navy debt by the odious title of a loan; he puts me in mind of a boy who having something to hide, put it behind his back, but forgot to shift it when he passed the company from whom it was intended to be concealed. Where, let me ask, is the difference, if I owe a shoemaker 10*l.* for shoes, and, instead of paying him cash, I give him my note for the said sum with interest, or if I borrow 10*l.* of my taylor upon the same terms to discharge the debt I owe to the shoemaker. What difference will there be when the 10 millions are funded in the 3 per cent. consols, between the said 10 millions so funded and the 7*½* millions funded last April. It has all the effect of a loan, and if the minis-

ter cannot compromise the debt with the bill-holders, he must borrow money of other people to satisfy their demands. The whole amount of this finesse is as follows: people in reckoning the expence of the year recollect the loan and forget the navy debt. More than this I cannot discover. If there be more, the minister, or at least his reporters, have not explained it. The minister says there is an absolute necessity for taking this load of navy debts out of circulation. This necessity is not explained in any report that I have seen; nor can I imagine more than one advantage that can be derived from it, and that one I will not mention; nobody can be so weak as to suppose that it can add one guinea to the specie now in this kingdom: for the operation is this, a bill-holder gives up a bill of 1000*l.* and in return, one of the clerks of the bank writes into his name 172*l.* stock, or thereabouts, if in the consols. Suppose, for example, the minister had reckoned in this way; we find ourselves indebted on the navy's account 10 millions, but the bills are not yet due, and the earliest of them have six months to run. But as there is a very heavy discount on those bills, owing to the extreme depression of the stocks, and the hope of an early peace, we find that for every 35*l.* which we have to pay we are obliged to give bills for 10*l.* Now we will alter our mode of payment, and instead of drawing bills on ourselves at 15 months date, we will draw the bills

at

at three months only; this will necessarily lower the discount on future bills; and as to the bills already issued, let us pay them as they become due. With respect to the bill-holders, they have no ground of complaint, if they are paid as the bills become due. I am now to point out the advantage which the public would or may have from this mode of settlement. The bills are divided into four classes, and taking the medium throughout, I will suppose that $2\frac{1}{4}$ millions shall fall due in six months, and that a peace should then be settled, these $2\frac{1}{4}$ millions might be redeemed, stocks being at 75, with the funding of $2\frac{1}{4}$ millions in the 5 per cents, instead of funding more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions. The second class, which have nine months to run, might be funded on terms still more advantageous to the public, the third and fourth on terms still better, provided peace to continue, and if it were once made, there is little probability of its being broken again in 15 months. As things are managed the public are to pay bills not due, at a time when they must borrow money to pay them on the most exorbitant terms. Mr. Pitt does not care, he says, for the advantages which favoured individuals derive from this transaction, but he should feel for the situation of the public: he is their steward, and ought not to do any thing for their disadvantage. Perhaps, having been threatened with inquiry, he may think this the best means of warding off the danger by increasing the

the number of his friends, or the old *adage* may impress on his mind: In for a penny, in for a pound.

To bring this down to common understanding, I would wish every reader to consider himself as bound to his neighbour in the sum of 400*l.* One hundred payable in six months, one ditto in nine months, one ditto payable in 12 months, and another payable in 15 months; and let him suppose his neighbour to come to him with a request that he will pay him the 400*l.* iminediatly: what will my reader, or the debtor then say? He will answer thus: Neighbour, if I pay you 400*l.* now, I must sell out 700*l.* 3 per cent. to raise the money; whereas, if there should be a peace in six months, and I pay you as your bills become due, I may satisfy all your demands with the sale of 500*l.* stock. Here is a clear saving to the debtor of 200*l.* stock, upon seven; and of course this neighbour would gain so much, if the debtor be fool enough to pay. This is precisely the case between the public and the bill-holders at this moment. But this advantage is not enough for the favoured bill-holders; they have time for consideration, as they call it, which consideration means a knowledge of peace or war.

Great, very great should be the necessity of taking these bills out of circulation that can warrant

rant so hard a bargain for the public. As far as I can collect from the speeches in this debate, one would be apt to suppose that the necessity of funding the navy bills of last month arose from the weight which our negociations for peace will derive from the exoneration of the minister from this particular species of debt. The same debt transferred from one book to another will not cramp his fingers so much. Now I say that a Gasconade of this kind must lose all its effect with the Directory of Paris when they are told by authority that it is nothing more than a Gasconade. But what crowns the busineſs is, the time given to the bill-holders to make their election. If peace be certain, they close ; if not, do the best you can for yourselves, minister, we have nothing to say to you and your offers. What ambi-dexterity is displayed in this transaction ! But let me ask the minister, if he would condescend to anſwer an individual, whether those bill-holders, when they have turned their bills into stock, will be able to buy more navy bills, in order to keep up their circulation, and to induce contractors to take them in pay-
ment ? He must anſwer, They will not until they have sold the stock. Why then, that very money, which they receive for their stock, might have been laid out by their customers upon navy bills. Again, if the minister had been an œcono-
mical steward for the public, he might have in-
formed the bank, and through them the public,
that

that he meant to fund the navy bills in October. What a difference would that have made in the discount of these bills. As our minister has arranged it, the transaction is as prudent, as it would be in a banker to allow 15 per cent. discount on a bill this day, and to take the same bill back at par, nay at a premium a week hence. If these are financial abilities, I cannot help thinking that the dictionary stands in need of correction in its etymology. This flinging away money to make our neighbours think us rich, is like the tradesman's setting up his coach a week before he is gazetted.

There is one thing remarkable in all ministers; they are perpetually varying the mode of business, and in all those variations, individuals grew rich at the expence of the public. It would take a folio volume, were I to trace them through all their turns and meanders, and to shew to the world the effects of their conduct. The business of finance is beyond the reach of ordinary understandings; and it is the study of some people to perplex and confuse it, instead of illuminating and clearing it up.

I observe in one of the reports, that Mr. Pitt is beginning to talk about the radical wealth of this country; for it is to that which he must look for his ultimate resources.

Now, I apprehend he will not find, that the radical wealth of this nation is much increased by his administration. The ideal wealth is astonishingly increased, and like Dunning's motion, concerning the influence of the crown; it is increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. But who is to diminish it? Not Mr. Pitt. We all know the influence which habit has on the inhabitants of this globe; and it is reasonable to suppose, that like other spendthrifts, it will not be in his own power to correct the habit, unless the nation assist him in the arduous undertaking.

Mr. Fox says, we must meet the evil manfully; we must look on danger in the face; that is, we must somehow or other get rid of this debt. This ideal wealth of Mr. Pitt's making, is, as Mr. Burke emphatically says, quite an incumbrance, and therefore they all wish to be rid of it. But how are we to get rid of it without breach of faith? There is but one method which presents itself to my mind; a method perfectly consistent with equity, justice, and reason; but there are too many, and too powerful interests, that would oppose the execution of such a plan as I would propose and recommend.

I now return to the Hon. Mr. Burke, whom I have for some time lost sight of; for when I came to speak of matters of finance, the very mention

of his name would have been an absurdity of the first order. He hates calculation, whence I conclude he does not understand it. For my own part, I think it the only thing that carries conviction to the human understanding, I may like it the better, because mathematical learning came to me by nature, without study, and without instruction. It is from this peculiar turn of my mind, and the habit I have had from my infancy of bringing every thing to demonstration and arithmetic, that I have always looked upon rhetoricians, when they keep within bounds, as the most delusive of mankind; and when they go without bounds, as the most absurd and ridiculous of the human species. In this last class stands our author, and thence the satisfaction I have felt and communicated to others, in laughing at his nonsense.

Before I bid adieu to Mr. Burke, I must observe, that the similarity of his spirit to that of the reverend Bishop Bonner, goes far towards proving the doctrine of Pythagoras, concerning the transmigration of souls. Who knows, but the present Edmund Burke might have been the quondam Bishop Bonner, and that they both had their education in the school of Mahomet? There is a text in the Coran better suited to their opinions, than any to be found in the Pentateuch. "*Kæilu fi sebeellah*," (which translated literally from the Arabic, signifies, kill in God's way, or

in the way of God) is an excellent text for an holy plebiscite. Volumes have been written to explain the sense of those four original Arabic words. To be sure they are words of great latitude; but the most orthodox interpretation that ever fell into my hands, and to which Mr. Burke, I dare say, would readily assent, is, that you may kill whom you like, provided you take God's name in doing it. The name of God will render any war both just and necessary.

With respect to the best method of guarding against the prevalency of Jacobin principles, I know of none better than is contained in this short precept—"Do not govern too much."

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